

PART 2



FACILITATOR NOTES

Speech Pathologists
Children's Services
(Metropolitan North & East Region)

2nd Revised Edition
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LANGUAGE SKILLS
IN THE CLASSROOM

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Background to the Workshop

This workshop was initially developed for a Teacher Aide Training day, coordinated by the Learning Support Teacher in the Northern cluster of Sydney. The in-service aimed to provide Teacher Aides with a practical insight into the use, purpose and importance of communication in the classroom and to give some basic simple strategies that they may be able to implement in the classroom environment.

As such, the workshop was developed from experiences working with school age children and with the knowledge of the sorts of questions teacher aides often ask.

The workshop is therefore not particularly detailed in information, facts and theory and research - but rather more practical with hands on ideas.

The origins of many of the ideas are difficult to recall and although we have tried to include as many of the original handouts and references, there are some brilliant ideas whose origins we do not know.

Expected Learning Outcomes

On completion of this workshop it is anticipated that participants should be able to:

- Discuss the language needs of students in the classroom.
- Become familiar with specific terminology.
- Identify, share and develop classroom strategies, which may assist students in the classroom.
- Be aware of communication and its numerous components (ie speech, expressive language, receptive language, written language etc).
- Adopt some of the suggested strategies for use with their students.



Facilitation

As much of the workshop consists of ideas and information sharing, the facilitator should be a Speech Pathologist with a sound working knowledge of school-age issues and the ability to draw upon their own practical experience and ideas.

Attached is a suggested set of references and readings for further information and ideas if needed.

Workshop Plan

- Time:** Dependent on topics selected
- Presenter:** A Speech Pathologist
- Intended Audience:** Teacher Aides (Years K - 12)
- What you need:**
- Overhead
 - Overhead pens
 - Participant handouts
 - Case study cards

The Facilitator is encouraged to draw upon their own experiences and to include relevant personal experiences and ideas. The Facilitator should encourage group participation as much as possible.

Time Required to Present Topics (Approx)



Time	Topic
20 mins	Introduction "What is Communication?" Language skills that develop at school
20 mins	Analysis of language skills required
15 mins	Identifying children with language difficulties
20 mins	Language sample discussion
5-10 mins for each	Develop strategies
10-15 mins	Strategies to develop and enhance communication
10-15 mins	Ideas and strategies to develop expressive language skills
10-15 mins	Ideas and strategies to develop comprehension skills
10-15 mins	Ideas and strategies to develop literacy skills
10-15 mins	Overall strategies to develop and enhance communication

Language Skills that Develop at School



Dog starts with "D"



Literacy

Essay



Following one simple instruction



Receptive Language

Following instructions &
understanding questions
to complete an exam paper



Telling mum about school



Expressive Language

Debating team



Taking turns in a game



Social Skills

Picking up subtle cues that
your friends aren't interested



LANGUAGE SKILLS
IN THE CLASSROOM



Group Activity 1 : Whiteboard Activity

Analysis of Language Skills

This activity is designed to help Teacher Aides be aware of the numerous language skills required to complete common tasks at school.

It aims to assist them to break down and identify the different language skills used and to consider what difficulties a child might be experiencing, and if they have a problem in one particular area, what implications this may have on their school performance across the board.

Use the whiteboard to create a “3 ” grid. Refer participants to their notes - encourage discussion about:

- The numerous language skills required to complete common tasks
- How a difficulty/problem in one area may impact on numerous tasks.

Depending on your audience you may choose to refer to the “Years K-6” or the “Years 7-12” Activities or both.

Years K-6 Activities	Telling News	Listening to news	Writing a blurb about news
Speech			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency • Articulation • Voice 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ only to ask questions	X
Receptive Language (Comprehension)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary / concepts • Short term memory • Sequencing information 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Expressive Language			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Grammar/Syntax • Sequence of Events 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ only to ask questions	✓ ✓ ✓
Written Language			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of sounds • Letter sound correspondence • Sequencing • Spelling • Structure of writing 	X	X	✓ ✓ ✓
Social Language Skills			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatics • Picking up on body language 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	X

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Years 7-12 Activities	Reporting back about a science experiment	Listening to the instructions about how to conduct an experiment	Writing a report about the science experiment
Speech			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency • Articulation • Voice 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ only to ask questions	X
Receptive Language (Comprehension)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary / concepts • Short term memory • Sequencing information 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Expressive Language			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Grammar/Syntax • Sequence of Events 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ only to ask questions	✓ ✓ ✓
Written Language			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of sounds • Letter sound correspondence • Sequencing • Spelling • Structure of writing 	X	X	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Social Language Skills			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatics • Picking up on body language 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	X

LANGUAGE SKILLS

IN THE CLASSROOM



Group Activity 2

(Overhead 3)

Identifying Children with Language Difficulties

This activity aims to highlight to the participants how they might be able to identify children with language difficulties. It is not the intention that the participant single out children who may have a language difficulty, but rather to alert the participant to consider that if a child is having a particular difficulty, it could possibly be a language based difficulty.

The Checklist is adapted from Owens (1991)

Ask the participants to think of a particular child they work with and tick the appropriate boxes for that child.

Allow 5-10 minutes - and then discuss. Point out to the participants how a communication problem can vary, from simple mispronunciation of words to difficulty following instructions and interacting socially.

Identifying Children with Language Problems in the Classroom



The following behaviours may indicate that a child has a language impairment. Use the following as a checklist:

Speech Sounds And Literacy

- Child has difficulty reading or writing
- Child mispronounces words and sounds

Receptive Language

- Child appears to be attending to communication but remembers little of what is said
- There are long pauses between a remark and the child's reply or between successive remarks by the child. It appears as if the child is searching for a response or is confused
- Child has difficulty following directions
- Child has difficulty comprehending new words and concepts

Expressive Language

- Child's language skills seem to be much lower than other skills such as mechanical, artistic or social
- Child has difficulty participating in classroom discussion
- Child has difficulty answering questions
- Child's questions often vague or inaccurate
- Child's questions often poorly framed
- Child has difficulty relating sequential events (such as giving step by step accounts of an incident in the playground)

Child has difficulty with one or more of the following:

- verb tense (walked)
- articles (a, the)
- auxiliary verbs (is)

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- pronouns (he, she) irregular verbs (caught) prepositions (on)
- word order irregular plurals (mice)
- Child's sentence structure seems immature or over reliant on forms such as subject, verb, object. It's unoriginal, dull
- Child's question and/or negative sentence style is immature
- Child omits small unemphasised words, such as auxiliary verbs (e.g. will, might, should) and prepositions (e.g. on, in, from)
- Child has difficulty finding correct word to use
- Child omits word endings, such as plurals (-s) and past tense (-ed)

Pragmatics And Social Skills

- Child does not seem to consider the effect of language on the listener (e.g. may be too direct or abrupt)
- Child does not alter their style of communication for different audiences and locations

Child has difficulty interpreting the following:

- figurative language (e.g. "pull your socks up!") humour
- gestures emotions body language

Child has difficulty using language socially to:

- request pretend protest
- greet request information gain attention
- respond share ideas/feelings clarify
- relate events entertain reason
- Child's comments are often off topic or inappropriate for the conversation

! *If you have ticked any of these items for the child, please contact a Speech Pathologist or someone who can help investigate the child's language difficulties further.*



Group Activity 3

(Overheads 4 and 5)

The aim of this group activity is to stimulate discussion about the difference between two language samples of children who are of similar ages.

Both are language samples of children recounting the story of "Peter and The Cat" (S.A.O.L.A. - School Age Oral Language Assessment by Allen, Leitaio & Donovan)

The first child is a girl in Kindergarten who has delayed language skills. The second child is in Year 1 and has average to above average language skills. It is important to note the obvious differences in the children's recount - the length, vocabulary used (conjunctions, adjectives), use of past tense, syntax, sequencing and language complexity.

Case History

Show the two language samples of "Peter and the Cat".

Provide the following background information:

- Both children are female and of similar ages (however, one is in Kindergarten and the other is in Year 1).
- Each child was read the story first and then had to re-tell the story in their own words using pictures as a visual cue.
- The Year 1 child demonstrated no language difficulties and might be considered to have average language skills.
- The Kindergarten child appears to have some language difficulties.

Questions and Discussions for the Group

1. What are some of the obvious differences between the two language samples?
2. Discuss the differences between the vocabulary used.
3. Discuss the ordering and sequencing ability of each child.
4. Discuss the complexity of the stories.

Peter and the Cat

Female 6 yrs 3 mths; Yr K

There was a boy called Peter.
He liked pets miaow, mow
He looked behind the tree and he couldn't see
then he miaowed again
and then the tree broke
and then he, he frightened... Help, help, help
and then a man was watering the garden got a
got a ladder
and helped the boy
and the cat got down and he said "Thank You"
and "where have you been? You be late"
"Mum can I keep this kitten this cat"
"Yes"

Peter and the Cat

Female 6yrs 10mths; Yr 1

One day a little boy named Peter liked animals. One day when he was walking home from school he heard a cat saying "meow". He didn't know where it was from. He looked behind the tree then the cat yelled louder & Peter could hear, saw where it was. Trying to be helpful he climbed up the tree. When he got to the top he was very scared. He held onto a branch so he wouldn't (keep) so he wouldn't lose his balance holding tightly on with the cat. Finally a man down the street heard Peter's call. He ran down to help him. He took a ladder & tried to help Peter get down, the cat and Peter down. Peter said "thank you" to the man still a little bit scared. He got home and told his mother. He said to his mother "Can I keep this cat please Mother?" said Peter "Yes, but next time don't try to climb up a tree if you can't see an adult to help you"





Group Activity 4

(Handout - Case Scenario Cards, Butchers Paper and Pen)

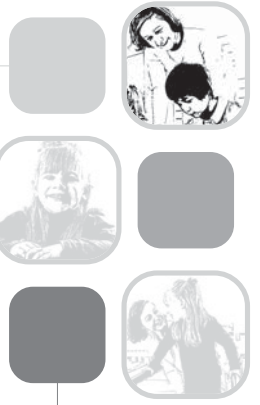
Developing Strategies

This activity aims to start encouraging the participants to break down activities into their separate language components and to begin to consider and develop strategies that might assist a student.

Organise participants into groups. Give each group a case scenario to discuss (be aware of primary and high school scenarios). The group must develop strategies to assist the child in the classroom.

Discuss with the group the types of strategies that they might use, e.g.

- Changing the environment (e.g. repositioning the child, allowing them extra time to complete the task, location in the classroom, enlarging the worksheet).
- Providing the child with an extra tool (e.g. computer, scribe, adapted pencils, computer program, dictionary, etc).
- Modifying the task (e.g. only have to answer 6/10 questions, may have to present it in point form rather than in paragraphs, etc).
- Changing the expectations (e.g. do not expect the child to have as many spelling words as the rest of the class).
- Providing the child with a strategy to complete the task (e.g. teach them rehearsal techniques, to use scaffolds and plans for written and oral work, to write things down so they remember them, etc).



Case Study 1:

(Overhead 6)

Sam, a Kindergarten child (5-6 years old), has a lot of difficulty telling news. He always tells the teacher he has forgotten his news. When he does tell news, he rarely orders the events correctly - making it difficult to follow and understand what he is talking about.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Bring remnants of his outings and what he wants to talk about to help him remember.*
- *Complete a scaffold/plan (who, when, where, what), before his news that he can refer to, to help him sequence and organise his thoughts.*
- *Practice time before giving news in front of the class.*

Case Study 2:

(Overhead 7)

Lauren, a Year 1 child (6-7 years old) never follows classroom instructions correctly. When the teacher gives out 2 or more instructions she usually only completes one of them and then gets into trouble as she has failed to complete the rest.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Break down the instructions into single steps.*
- *Use symbols/pictures or words as a visual cue to help her remember all the instructions she needs to complete.*
- *Teach her to repeat the instructions to herself - and to ask the teacher if she has forgotten anything.*
- *Encourage the teacher to number the instructions so she is aware of how many things there are to do, e.g. "1, I want you to get your books, 2, open to your last work, 3, colour in the picture".*



Case Study 3:

(Overhead 8)

Tom is a Year 3 child (8-9 years old). He has difficulty with the fine motor components of writing (i.e. he has difficulty holding a pen, forming letters and writing neatly). To complete any written tasks takes Tom a long time. Generally his work is messy, he writes less than the others and his written language is not very detailed.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Using a computer to type his work.*
- *Using a scribe.*
- *Tape recording.*
- *Tom can write half and someone can help him complete the other half.*

Case Study 4:

(Overhead 9)

John is in Year 4 (10-11 years old) and still has difficulty using irregular past tense (e.g. "I broked the vase") and he constantly confuses "he" and "she". This is evident in both his written and spoken language.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Modelling.*
- *Whole class activities and worksheets.*
- *Including past tense words on his spelling list.*
- *Encouraging him to edit his work.*



Case Study 5:

(Overhead 10)

Brett is in Year 8 (13-14 years old) and has always had difficulty with his writing and keeping up with the rest of the class. Recently his teachers have expected him to write more in a shorter time frame, but he finds that his writing becomes too messy to read and that he spends more time trying to concentrate on his writing than on the contents of what is being written.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Using a computer to type his work.*
- *Using a scribe.*
- *Tape recording.*
- *Brett can write half and someone can help him complete the other half.*

Case Study 6:

(Overhead 11)

Jessica is in Year 10 (15-16 years old) and has great difficulty in Science - whenever the class is completing an experiment she finds it hard to organise her thoughts and write down exactly what happened. She also finds she has difficulty remembering and understanding many of the new terms and vocabulary presented in each class.

Can you suggest some strategies to assist?

Some suggested strategies:

- *Provide her with a list of new vocabulary and simple definitions (could be a whole class activity).*
- *Use scaffold/plan to help her report accurately the essential information.*

**Groups to present and share their strategies
and ideas (record on whiteboard).**

Strategies to Develop and Enhance Communication

(Overhead 12)

Many of the strategies written below can be incorporated into everyday situations (in fact you probably already do many of them). One of the best ways to develop language skills is to be exposed to and experience language, so that's what many of these strategies aim to do.

Strategies

1. Create a positive environment (e.g. a student who is embarrassed that they can't say "th" talks little in class).
2. Create a need to communicate (e.g. give binary choices – don't predict everything for your student, let them know the power of communicating).
3. Create opportunities in the daily routine (e.g. if there is a choice of activities, ask your student which one, or maybe they can describe what they are doing).
4. Allow time for your student to respond (e.g. reading a book).
5. Talk about what your student is doing.
6. Focus on your student's interests.
7. Ask open-ended questions (e.g. "Tell me about your weekend" rather than "Did you have a good weekend?").
8. Keep sentences simple, repeat and reword instructions.





Ideas and Strategies to Develop Receptive Language

(Overhead 13)

- Rephrase questions:
 - e.g. "wh" question - who is that? / what person?
- when? / what day?
- Consider the number & complexity of instructions.
- Repeat instructions.
- Pause, stress and emphasise key words.
- Allow time for student to respond.
- Use visual cues and gestures.
- Ensure the child is attending (eye contact and minimal distractions).
- Consider associated factors e.g. fatigue, hearing impairment, external distractions, anxiety or emotions that may impact on receptive language.

Ideas and Strategies to Develop Expressive Language

(Overhead 14)

1. Vocabulary/Categorising Activities

Expose your student to new and exciting vocabulary through books, activities and experiences. Don't just label. Talk about words, discuss, provide associations and categories. Use activities and games, e.g.

- Panic
- I Spy
- I Went to the Shops

2. Model Correct Grammatical Forms

- Child - "I drew at school"
- Teacher Aide - "Yes. You drew at school"

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3. Expansion

- Child - "The tree moved"
- Teacher Aide - "Yes. The wind is making the tree move"

4. Concrete/Visual Tools to Aid Expression

- Scaffolds and plans
- Chat books
- Pictorial aids

5. Open ended questions

6. Time out just to chat

7. Barrier Games

- Fish
- Drawing pictures
- Cars
- Battleship
- Blocks, beads
- Maps

Ideas and Strategies to Develop Literacy

(Overhead 15)

- Read and discuss lots of books.
- Play word games e.g. Hangman, Scrabble, Boggle.
- Give children a chance to determine sounds in words.
- Provide opportunities to write different genres e.g. letters, recounts, procedures.
- Plans and scaffolds.
- Personalised dictionaries.
- Use of sound letter charts, magnetic letters, typewriters, computers, tape recorders.
- Phonemic awareness activities.

NB. If a child is having difficulty with the mechanics of writing don't let them miss out on the language experience... use the other ways eg computer, transcribing, tape recorders etc.

Glossary of Terms

Communication:

A two way process of encoding, transmitting and decoding signals in order to exchange information and ideas between participants. Communication might be spoken, written, body language or alternative communication (e.g. signing, and communication boards etc.)

Speech:

The actual production of speech. Includes articulation, voice, and fluency/stuttering

Articulation:

The production of speech through the movement of tongue, lips, teeth, breath and voice control - resulting in speech. eg. if someone has an articulation difficulty they may have a lisp, always substitute /f/ for /t/ or confuse the sounds in words.

Language:

The vehicle through which we communicate.

Receptive Language:

The ability to comprehend language information received. Includes knowledge of vocabulary, concepts, short term memory etc.

Expressive Language:

The ability to express one's thoughts and feelings - may be oral or written. This includes knowledge of vocabulary, syntax/grammar and sequencing skills.

Pragmatics:

The aspect of language concerned with the appropriate use of language within a communication context.

Semantics:

Underlying meaning of words and the relationship between them.

Syntax:

Rules of language that governs the arrangement and sequencing of words according to the meaning relationship among them.

Phonemic Awareness:

Awareness of and ability to manipulate the sounds in words



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